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## LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL

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## L.A. PASSES “NO-SWEAT” ORDINANCE 13-0

Councilmember Eric Garcetti joined Tom Hayden and representatives from Sweatshop Watch, Progressive Jewish Alliance, Progressive Christians Uniting, garment workers’ union UNITE HERE and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, to cheer the passage this morning of the nation’s most innovative and far-reaching anti-sweatshop purchasing ordinance to date. The ordinance, which builds on the international accomplishments of the anti-sweatshop movement, requires that a living wage be paid to workers on many city contracts and creates a flexible mechanism for the city to share information with advocates and governments facing these issues across the globe.

“Whether we’re buying uniforms, desk chairs, computers or pens, the city government shouldn’t be sending its money to sweatshops,” said Councilmember Eric Garcetti, who introduced the original motion calling for an anti-sweatshops law. “Companies who exploit or abuse their workers should have no part in supplying L.A. with the goods we use to run the city.”

"It is fitting that in Los Angeles, the sweatshop capital of the United States, city contractors and subcontractors will be held to the strongest to-date ‘sweatfree’ purchasing code in the nation, protecting abused workers here and around the world," said Erica Zeitlin, associate director of the No More Sweatshops-Los Angeles office, which proposed the legislation under the stewardship of former Ca. State Sen. Tom Hayden. “This law is a true landmark for those who care about lifting exploited workers out of misery and a historic opportunity for a new model of socially responsible business practices in the public sphere,” she added. "Its innovative provisions for contracting with an independent monitor also give the policy real teeth."

“Thousands of workers toil in sweatshops without hope of ever seeing a living wage,” said Christina Vasquez, international vice president of UNITE HERE. “I want to thank Councilmember Garcetti for his leadership on this issue.”

“City workers wear these uniforms,” said Julie Butcher, president of SEIU Local 347, which represents city workers. “It’s important to us to know that the only sweat in our uniforms is ours.”

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The ordinance, if passed, would require vendors to the city to sign a Code of Conduct, affirming that they and their suppliers will subscribe to all applicable workplace laws. Vendors (or their suppliers) found to be in violation would be subject to penalties and, if no corrective action is taken, to the termination of the contract. Seeking to take advantage of the compliance standards that have been put into play chiefly by universities with anti-sweatshop codes, the ordinance comes forward with first-year funding of \$50,000 for contract with an international compliance firm. This contract will be used to monitor and investigate compliance with the code of conduct on the part of producers that may be located outside of Los Angeles or even the United States.

The ordinance also requires that a “procurement living wage” be paid to workers working on garment contracts. Once standards for its application have been developed, the procurement living wage will be gradually expanded to cover all city purchasing, following the recommendation of an advisory group formed to oversee implementation of the no-sweat ordinance.

Other features of the ordinance before Council today include:

- The formation of an advisory working group comprising representatives of the City, advocacy groups and labor organizations
- Public disclosure of contractors and subcontractors working on City commodity contracts in languages of employees who form the majority of the employment pool, such as English, Spanish, Chinese, Thai, and Vietnamese.
- Accessing of inter-governmental public records and information from non-governmental entities of potentially non-responsible contractors and subcontractors.
- Requirement that vendors who are not under contract with the City but who appear on department-approved apparel lists also sign the Code of Conduct as a condition of listing.
- Contracting with an independent monitor to conduct on-site factory assessments.

The City Administrative Officer reported that implementation of a procurement living wage would cost beneath \$20,000 and \$70,000 annually on top of annual contracting for apparel and related accessories of \$3 million.

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